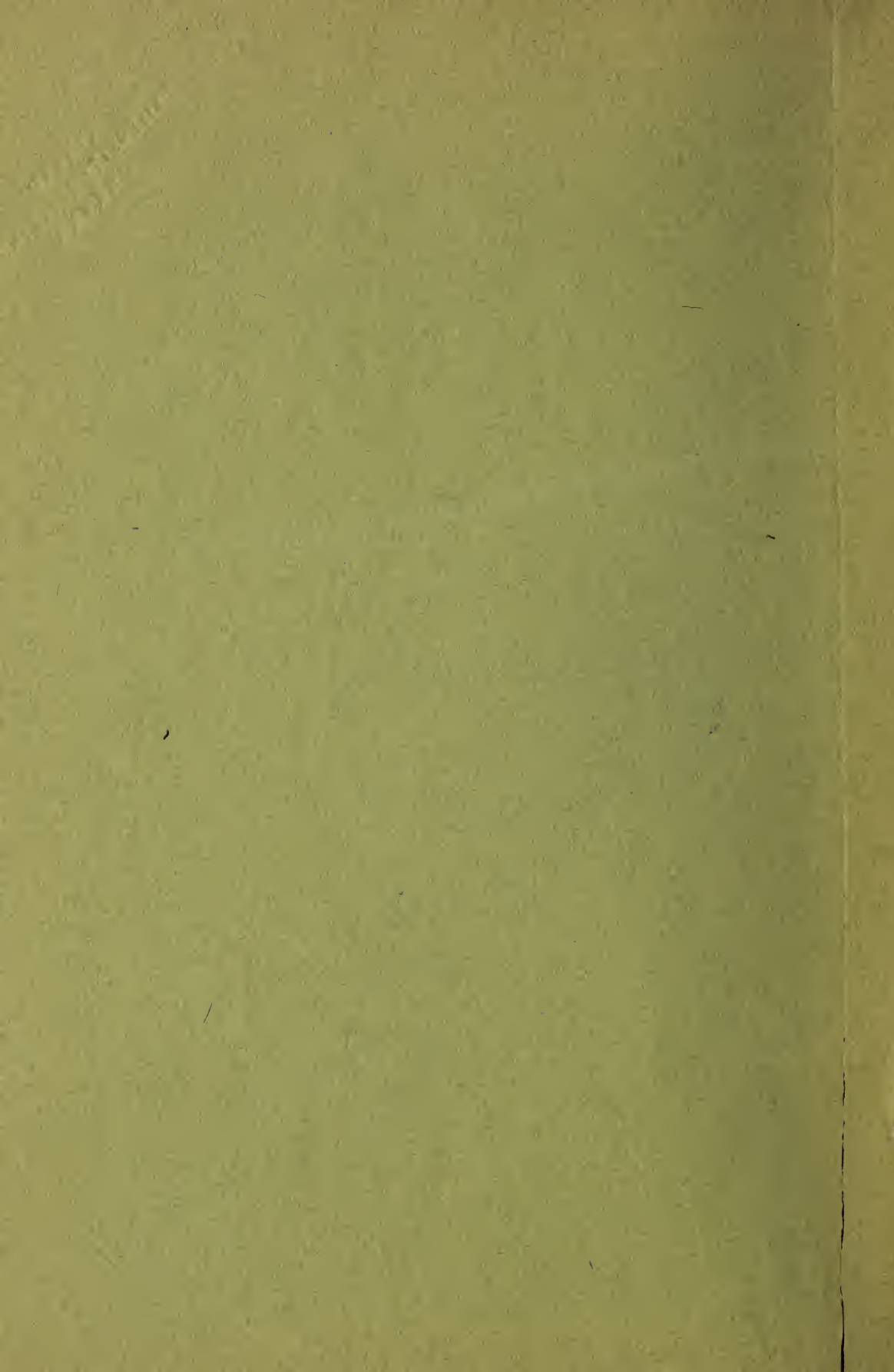




THE LIBRARY AND ITS FACILITIES

By G. W. Lee

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The Library Department aims to put the members of the Stone & Webster organization, more especially the three hundred or more of the Boston office, in touch with needed information. Its upwards of 4,000 books, periodicals and other pamphlets are used at the rate of about one every ten minutes, or fifty a day, or 15,000 a year. Why? Because people doing something new to themselves want to know how others have done the same or similar thing, and thus to profit by their example.

The Library was described in 1907 in a pamphlet entitled "The Library and the Business Man." Though much of what was said then holds true to-day, there are a few radical differences. The Filing Department and the Library were then one, but are now separate, the Library containing the printed matter, as it were, the Filing Department largely the typewritten, the archives of the organization.

Questions and Resources for Answering Them

We endeavor to record most of the questions that come to the Library, noting, also, the literature consulted. A glance at the cards containing these records shows the wide range of appeals that are made to this department. The following, mostly recent, are selected as characteristic and as suggesting not only its facilities but the limitations which it is aiming to overcome:

(1) *Tables giving data for figuring the results of cooling towers.* According to the record, fifteen minutes required to find references in Kent's Handbook, Ganot's Physics, and Gueth on Cooling Towers.

(2) *Information on two different kinds of pavements.* Three hours and fifteen minutes required by two persons, consulting back numbers of a half dozen or more trade journals, the Engineering Index, Technical Press Index, and duplicate sets of indexes. The questioner needed, also, to go to outsiders for testimonials as to these pavements.

(3) *Name and address of the president of an engineering company in New York.* Two minutes to find it in the Directory of Directors. Sources of information on addresses are limitless. Experience counts for much in knowing where to look.

(4) *Which is preferable, "issue and placement" of bonds or "issue and placing"?* Answered offhand, as a matter of judgment, that "placement" should be used with "issue," as the same form of construction and pleasing to the ear, even though "placing" might be grammatical. (Better still to say "issuing" and "placing," as "placement" is rarely used in this country.) In this connection it should be added that questions are put to the Library almost daily with regard to correct English, how to address officials, and the like.

(5) *Information on Guatemala, map, etc.* An hour, looking through Daily Consular and Trade Reports, but finding references in Commercial America, The Americana, Latin America, and the Rand-McNally Atlas.

(6) *Calculation of replacement funds, curves particularly.* Forty-five minutes to get ample references. Current literature reference cards particularly useful. British publications also threw light.

(7) *Write-up of L Street station of Boston Edison Company.* References obtained by two persons, twenty minutes each, by consulting our Current Literature References, also the Engineering Index, by which they were referred to six different publications, mostly trade journals. Same request coming up three months later was filled in twelve minutes by looking up record of what had required forty minutes the previous time.

(8) *Wind velocity in St. Louis prior to 1908.* Not available in publications at hand, but at Weather Bureau, in the Post Office Building, where the information was in back numbers of the Monthly Weather Review.

(9) *Samples of periodicals that are intended for municipal officials.* Telephoned Public Library, asking to have samples ready, and sent boy to get them, with the result that eight were brought to the office.

(10) *Certain features of references on high pressure natural gas.* Turned over to Nelson's Loose-Leaf Encyclopedia headquarters, and in the course of a few weeks references, with bibliography, received in twelve typewritten sheets; with also

three large clippings. These sheets, which were of standard shape and punched to fit, we have now inserted in the Encyclopedia as addenda on Natural Gas.

(11) *Use of railroad men during off hours when they are regularly employed during rush hours.* Wanted by a man in one of our companies. Inquiries of various libraries, government departments, specialists, etc., substantially in vain. Some one could probably answer this satisfactorily. A problem to find him.

(12) *Method of boring for highway under railroad track.* Two hours spent and nothing found. Questioner believed that this sort of information is not given out by the railroads themselves.

Incidentally, in commenting upon the above questions various resources have been mentioned. Books and periodicals dealing with engineering and economics, general reference works and annual reports, are obvious necessities. Of great use, however, and a painstaking work, is the card list of periodical articles, supplementing to date the pamphlets that we issued for general distribution, 1907 and 1908, entitled "Current Literature References." An author and subject card index and a shelf list refer to our books. We have the Engineering Index, annual and monthly (the latter clipped and pasted on convenient sheets), also other special indexes. We obtain duplicate copies of indexes to the most used trade journals, and by having these in a special collection obviate taking the heavy bound volumes so frequently from the shelves. Furthermore, the many specialists of the office make a reference resource more important than all else. In fact, with business houses generally is it not the individual, with his experience, that is looked to almost entirely? In consequence, it behooves the Library to know who's who in the office and what his specialty is.

Other Features of the Service

Compiled from the card references are *semi-weekly special sheets*, dated for Tuesdays and Fridays. They are sent to such members of the office as request them and to some outside. The Tuesday sheets cover Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, the Friday sheets Electric Railways and Miscellany. In addition many *special notices* are sent, calling to the attention of this person or that articles, new books, etc., that are thought

of most likely interest to him. Not long ago a form was sent out, asking persons to note thereon topics with which they wished to be kept in touch, topics upon which they could be referred to as specialists, literature they were willing to lend when library copies were not available, societies to which they belonged, etc. At the time of writing this paper the returns are being collated for betterment of the library service. On the third Thursday of each month, at 5 o'clock, there is an *auction* to dispose of the surplus and superseded material. By this means not only is a certain revenue realized, but much is saved from the wastebasket, going instead to those who are glad to get it. The auction lists are sent about a week in advance to those requesting them. *The Boston Public Library* is visited with much frequency and monthly lists made of new literature brought thence to the office, or available to be brought if wanted. *Accessions* of books and pamphlets are listed in the Public Service Journal each month, and in its Library Notes attention is called to what is deemed of particular interest. The *lending* of literature is informal, charge-out cards being filled in with the number (in case of periodicals, with initials), the name of the borrower, and date when borrowed. Periodicals are due back in three days, no special time being assigned for books.

Classification System

The essentials of the classification are largely to be found in "The Library and the Business Man," referred to before, of which copies may be had for the asking. Reports, maps and other publications permitting of geographical classification receive a number that indicates state, district, city, etc., with a supplemental subject classification that follows a decimal point. Engineering, economic and other publications, not geographical, have class numbers starting with a decimal point. Thus 1461.03 is assigned to the Revised Ordinances of Boston, but .03.M13 to Macomber on The Fixed Law of Patents; the M13 being a regular library abbreviation for the author, Macomber, according to the well known Cutter System. Periodicals are filed by their initials as far as practicable. Periodical references, however, are classified by a system based upon the divisions of the Engineering Index for the first two significant figures, next coming a letter, which in the latest revision of the filing schedule is mnemonic as far as practicable. Thus, if 12 is Construction,

12b refers to Buildings, 12s to Steel, 12w to Wood, etc. This is being worked out for a loose-leaf handbook, of which a sample is given below (A). Letters are frequently received asking about classification, and the general word of advice would be not to crystalize a system too soon. It is erring on the right side to use already adopted systems. The Dewey System is good for libraries not too special, but one can hardly go far astray if he sticks to a dictionary system, arranging his topics in alphabetical order until sufficiently sure of the general scope of knowledge he is to deal with to justify a class system. Then to arrive at a class system in satisfactory detail is likely to be a long game of solitaire, with trying experiences.

Labor Saving Devices and New Methods Under Way

Various *blank forms* which save much time are used. One of these (Figure 1) is offered by way of illustration. It will be seen to provide for the author and title of a book, the Boston Public Library shelf number, list price, edition, date, etc. Spaces are allowed to show whether the book has been available or not, and to whom it has been referred; while by underscoring one can indicate whether it has charts, diagrams, illustrations, maps, plates, plans, portraits, or tables. Another blank form (Figure 2) is used for requesting departments or individuals to express their opinion as to whether a book, pamphlet, etc., (or notice thereof), submitted, should be added to the files. Other forms are illustrated in "Current Literature References, 1908," pp 14-16.

Fig. 1 (reduced from 3x5)

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------|------|
| Author | | BPL No. | |
| Title | | Elsewh'e | |
| | | List | Net |
| | | Ed | Date |
| Place | Publisher | | |
| Size pp | ch di il mp pln plt por ta | | |
| Out, not on shf, etc. | Seen | Referred to | |
| . | Taken | | |
| . | " | | |
| . | " | | |
| | No. on list | Due | |
| Date of BPL list | Noted? | Have we it? | |
| Library suggestions | (give below). | Well to note | |
| Disposal & remarks | | | |
| | | (Over) | |

The *mimeograph* is used for most of the circulars sent out from the Library, and the multigraph for various blank forms.

Loose-Leaf Handbook

This is planned as a special library catalogue. A few sheets have been issued in a preliminary edition, of which two samples are offered, (A) Sources on Building, and (B) Engineering Specialists. Referring to (A), suppose, by way of illustration, we desire a book on fireproof construction. Looking through the subjects in the slanting columns we find "Fireproofing" to be No. 4 of the second column, which begins with the letter "F," and down vertically we find three F's, one referring across to Kidder, one to Merriman, one to Trautwine—three books that cover fireproof construction to at least a certain extent. Looking for "Paint" we find the topic is No. 3 of those grouped (for want of space) at the end of the second slanting column; and down the vertical column of 3s we find that books by Gillette, Ketchum, Kidder, and Merriman, deal with this subject. (B), the tabulation of Engineering Specialists, is consulted in like manner.

Fig. 2 (reduced from 3x5)

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------|----------------------|---|-----|----|--|---------|
| Library | Eng. Dept. | (or notice thereof). | Do you advise file? buy? get on approval? subscribe? exchange for journal, etc? | Yes | No | Not hearing from you we may dispose as follows: | Libr'n. |
| Mgt. Assn | Purchasing | | | | | | |
| Securities | Chemical | | | | | | |
| Statistical | | | | | | | |
| Herewith is submitted | | | | | | | |

(A) BUILDING

Library of Stone & Webster—Loose-leaf Handbook

Serial No. 3

Class No. H12

Abbreviated list of sources of information.

Corrected to June 16, 1911

| <i>Subjects</i> | <i>Ref'd to by initial letters in columns</i> | <i>Subjects</i> |
|--|---|--|
| Arches, roofs, etc. | | Beams, columns & structure in gen. |
| Concrete (†) & masonry | | Contracts |
| Excavations & foundations | | Estimates & costs |
| Heating | | Fireproofing |
| Materials | | Specifications |
| Piping & Plumbing | | Tables, curves, etc. |
| Steel work | | 1 math'l; 2 formulae; 3 paint |
| Ventilating | | 4 stresses, strains; 5 legal |
| Woodwork & timber | | |
| ***** * Arthur, W..... ? E ST | | Bldg estimator. Ed 3 |
| ACE M S W Berg, L de C.... B | 12 4 | Safe bldg. I ed 4, '95; II, ed 1, '92 |
| *** *? * Gillette, HP..... E T 3 | | Hdbk of cost data. Ed 2 |
| Johnson, JB..... C S | | Eg contracts & spec'ns. Ed 3 |
| A S —, Bryan et al.... B S 1 | | Modern framed struc- tures. Ed 8 |
| A S Ketchum, MS..... B E S 3 | | Steel mill bldgs & calc of stresses |
| ACEHMPSVW Kidder, FE..... BCEFST 234 | | Arch'ts & bldrs pock- et bk. Ed 15 |
| ACE ?MPS ?W Merriman, M(Ed) B FST 234 | | Am civil egrs pocket bk. |
| A S — & Jacoby..... B 1 4 | | Roofs & bridg. I, ed; II, ed; III, |
| ACE Patton, WM..... 2 4 | | Foundations. Ed 2 |
| Sayward, WH.... 5 | | Bldg law of Boston |
| ACE M? S W Trautwine, J C.... B EFST 2 | | Civ eggs pocket bk. Ed 19 |
| Tucker, JI..... C S 5 | | Contracts in eg. Ed 1 |
| Waddell, JAL et al C S | | Specifications & con- tracts |
| Wait, JC..... C S 5 | | Eg & arch'l jurispru- dence |
| ditto..... | | 5 Law of op'ns prel. to constrn. Ed 1 |

Entries marked with an asterisk () indicate that the topic is covered from a special standpoint, as "estimates & costs."

(†) Addenda on (c) Concrete & (rc) Reinforced Concrete: Brown, CC (hdbk for cem users, ed 3); Buel, AW & Hill (rc, ed 2); Brown, HP & Hill (methods & costs); Marsh, CF (rc, ed 1); Moisseiff, LS (rc literature, etc); Mörsch, E (c-steel); Reid, HA (c & rc); Taylor, FW & Thompson (c & rc, ed 2); Turneure, FE & Maurer (rc); Univ Ill (many tests by ANTalbot); Univ of Wis (tests).

N. B. Year given only when before 1900.

(B) ENGINEERING SPECIALISTS

Library of Stone & Webster—Loose-leaf Handbook

Serial No. 1

Class No. H666

Prospectus of List

Corrected to June 16, 1911

Subjects

Construction
Efficiency
Fuel
Gas
Hydroelectrics
Lighting
Operation (station)
Piping
Railway eg
Steam
Underground

Subjects

Civil eg
Design of Station
Electrical eg
Gas engines
Hydraulics
Mech'l eg
Rates, costs, calculations
Switchboards & substations
1 draughting; 2 electrolysis; 3 lightning protection
4 surveying
(These numbers can of course be extended indefinitely)

Specialists

| | | | |
|----|-----|------|-------|
| | P | Mr A | |
| | LO | " B | |
| | RS | " C | G |
| C | S | " D | D |
| EF | O | " E | M |
| C | | " F | |
| G | | " G | |
| | R U | " H | E |
| | S | " I | E M |
| L | R | " J | E |
| | R | " K | E |
| C | R | " L | C M |
| | R | " M | E M R |
| H | | " N | E H |
| | | " O | C H |

N.B. This table if carried to completion would contain upwards of fifty names. It is what the Library needs for co-ordinating men with books in its service as clearing house of information.

Outside Resources and Affiliations

The Public Library is perhaps our greatest outside source of assistance. We are favored with three special cards, entitling us to borrow eighteen books, most of which can be kept a month. Also, we use the Library of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers; we have not infrequent occasion to visit the Library of the Weather Bureau; we write to Nelson's Loose-Leaf Encyclopedia for information, to which we are entitled as purchasers of their twelve volumes; we receive bibliographical publications through the bulletin of the Special Libraries Association; and are helping to establish a clearing house of information among upwards of sixty libraries, business houses and individuals of the city and vicinity.



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